



[HF 2499](#) – School District Transparency (LSB6167HV)
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Fiscal Note Version – New

Description

[House File 2499](#) makes a variety of changes to the Iowa Code regarding education.

Division I — School District Transparency: The Bill requires each school district to post specified information to the school district’s Internet site, update the information twice each school year, and notify parents and guardians when the information is updated. The Bill requires that the information be accessible to the public for five years. The Department of Education (DE) is required to withhold State aid payments for school districts that intentionally violate the Bill’s reporting requirements in an amount to be determined by the DE.

The Bill also requires each school district to adopt protocols for the selection, review, reconsideration, and removal of materials from libraries operated by the school district; provides for the process of parent or guardian objection of materials, including appeal to the State Board of Education; and requires the DE to create a flowchart outlining the process for a parent or guardian to request the removal of a book from a school library.

Division II — Social Studies Instruction: The Bill requires a specified assessment of student knowledge be included in the currently required United States Government class and requires an achieved minimum 70.0% score on the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services civics test as a requirement of graduation.

Background

Division I — School District Transparency: School districts may use multiple systems for data collection and reporting as determined by the needs of the school. A Learning Content Management System allows for creating, managing, hosting, and tracking digital learning content. A Learning Management System is used for creating, delivering, tracking, and reporting educational courses and outcomes. Student Information Systems track and manage student data. Integrated Library Systems allow for management of school library resources.

A survey by the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) was completed with the following results from responding districts:

- 83.8% of school districts responded yes to using learning management software; 9.6% of school districts responded yes, but only at the high school level; and 6.6% of school districts responded no to using a learning management software.
- 54.5% of school districts responded yes to having an online library that can be accessed by the public, and 45.5% responded no to having an online library that can be accessed by the public.
- The average cost of classroom management software was \$37,000.
- The average annual cost of software to support an online library catalog was \$16,000.

Iowa Code section [256.11](#) details the requirements for prekindergarten to grade 12 educational programs in the State. School districts are required to offer and teach the courses as detailed. Additional information on the Iowa Academic Standards can be found [here](#).

Iowa Administrative Code [281—12](#) includes the definition of “library program” and the standards for library programs. The standards include the requirement that school boards of each school district adopt policies to address selection and reconsideration of school library materials.

Division II — Social Studies Instruction: In December 2016, the Education Commission of the States issued a 50-state [comparison](#) of civic education policies. This report found that 47 states, including Iowa, address civic education in state statute. Every state requires students to complete coursework in civics or social studies to graduate. The 2020 version of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services civics test with answers can be found [here](#).

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) (IDEA) is the federal law that defines and regulates special education. The law requires public schools to provide special education to children ages 3 to 21 who meet certain criteria. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) detail how the school will support students needing special education.

Necessary accommodations and modifications are detailed in an IEP document. Accommodations and modifications are changes to the classroom environment that may be necessary to assist the student. Accommodations refer to how a student learns. An accommodation helps the student to complete the same work at the same level as peers; examples would include using text-to-speech software or having test questions read out loud. Modifications refer to how much a student is expected to do or learn. A modification changes the work or the level of work; examples would include shorter writing assignments or lower-reading-level books.

Assumptions

Division I — School District Transparency:

- The DE will administer the provisions of the Bill using existing operating resources if no appropriation for administration is provided.
- According to DE statistics, for the 2020-2021 school year, there were 37,774 full-time teachers. Each teacher would require five work days of time to prepare materials for posting. A substitute teacher to release one teacher for one day is estimated to be \$145.

Division II — Social Studies Instruction:

- Students would have the opportunity to take the test in written or digital format, during regular class time. School districts may need to adjust curriculums to include the 128 questions from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services civics test to accommodate the new required assessment, but it is assumed that adjustments will be made through existing resources.
- No additional teacher classroom time would be required, but multiple test-taking opportunities may require staff time to proctor the test as needed to ensure completion and graduation of students.

Fiscal Impact

House File 2499 will have no fiscal impact to the State but will have a fiscal impact to local school districts as outlined below by division.

Division I — School District Transparency: The requirement of the Bill to make information sortable requires an interactive database, which may be beyond the current capabilities of school district software and systems. Additional administrative costs may be required to support the software and systems and support internal and external users. These costs cannot be estimated and would vary by school district.

School districts would need to provide classroom coverage for the time teachers would need to prepare materials for posting or add additional contract days for completion of the work. If substitutes were used rather than additional contract days, the statewide cost to school districts is estimated to be \$27.4 million.

It is unclear whether the required posting of materials would apply to individual students within each classroom who may have an IEP, are participating in a gifted and talented program, or are English learners. The posting of materials that would be identifiable to an individual student within a classroom could be in violation of the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#).

It is unclear whether the required posting of materials would apply to online classes, concurrent enrollment classes, or other coursework provided through a higher education institution. Additional permissions and costs may be required for the posting of materials that are from course providers outside of the school district.

For the posting of materials online, there may be additional costs to districts if local translation into additional languages is needed, but these costs cannot be estimated.

Division II — Social Studies Instruction: The Bill language allowing the modification of the required civics test for a student who has an IEP may be in conflict with federal regulation. It is unclear whether the Bill would allow sufficient accommodations to meet the needs of all special education students, allowing those students to graduate.

There may be additional costs to school districts, as multiple test-taking opportunities may require staff time to proctor the test as needed to ensure completion of the test and graduation of students. Costs to local school districts cannot be estimated.

House File 2499 may include a State mandate as defined in Iowa Code section [25B.3](#) which requires that any State mandate in the Bill be paid by a school district from the State Foundation Aid appropriation.

Sources

Department of Education
Iowa Association of School Boards
Urban Education Network
Rural School Advocates of Iowa
Iowa State Education Association
Education Commission of the States
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

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The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to [Joint Rule 17](#) and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.

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